

[Frank Kilborn]

ANECDOTE AND POEM OF "UNCLE KIM"

ECCENTRIC CHARACTER IN POULTNEY SLATE DISTRICT.

Form A Circumstances of Interview No. 4

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

August 25, 1938

Folklore Vermont 1938-9

1. August 25, 1938 at 2 p.m.

2. Home of informant

3. Informant— Mr. Frank Kilborn, East Poultney, Vermont

4. Mr. William Kilborn, son of informant, Poultney, Vermont

5. Unaccompanied

6. Mr. Kilborn's home is located off the village green in East Poultney. It is across from the historic East Poultney Baptist Church, and to the west of the church. The home is a small two story building, painted white, and standing next to a general store operated by the informant. The store was a school house where the informant learned his early lessons.

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One can gaze across the green and see many places of historic interest in the village. Inside, the home is neat, and has a comfortable atmosphere. [?????] The informant showed a melodion made in an East Poultney factory many years ago. The house has been standing for many year, and so reveals the simple architecture of early houses. The ceilings are low and the rooms are consequently small. Furnishings are modest and harmonize with the simple construction of the dwelling.

Form B Personal History< of Informant< Vermont C. F. Derven

Poultney

August 25, 1938

Folklore ——— Mr. Frank Kilborn, East Poultney, Vermont

1. French - Canadian ancestry. Some ancestors from Nova Scotia.
2. Born in East Poultney on January 19, 1877.
3. Wife, Son, William
4. Lived most of his life in East Poultney
5. Grammar School, East Poultney
6. He has been operating a general store in East Poultney for many years. He was a painter in his younger days, and worked for several painters in East Poultney.
7. Skilled house-painter and decorator.
8. Interested in history of East Poultney. He exhibited articles at the historic East Poultney Baptist Church during a recent celebration of the Historical Society there.

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9. The informant is a tall, big-boned man, with little excess weight, although being of large proportions. He is quite friendly and willing to aid one in any way, having the easy, quiet manner of large men and the consideration for other persons which experience brings. His face is expressive, and his eyes from behind glasses are alive with merriment when he tells of early experiences. He remembers many events of humorous nature that happened in, and around East Poultney. On serious topics he is equally certain and interesting. His wife, who added much information to the general subjects, stayed for a part of the interview, and showed several things of historic, and human interest to the interviewer. She is a small woman, and is friendly and helpful. Both show the community spirit of good citizens.

Form C—Text of Interview No. 4.

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

August 25, 1938

Subject——— Folklore—Square Dances in East Poultney

The following conversation occurred on this topic:

Q. I imagine they did a lot of square-dancing around here in the past. Where were the dances held?

A. Yes, they did. The dances were held in peoples' homes.

Q. Were they held at any special time?

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A. I don't believe there was a definite date. The dances were held in the largest rooms of someone's house. They called them 'Kitchen Digs', or 'Kitchen [Hops]?].

Q. What sort of music did they have?

A. Usually there was fiddler, who stood in one corner of the room, or between the doors if two rooms were used, and played the numbers. He called for the dances too.

Q. What numbers did he play?

A. Some of the numbers were: 'Money Musk', 'The Fisher's Hornpipe', 'Virginia Reel', 'Duncan House', and 'Portland Fancy'. At the last dance he played 'Morning Star'.

Q. Did the dances end in the morning?

A. The dances went on for many hours, and ended in the early morning.

Q. Did you attend any of these dances?

A. Certainly, I did. We always had a good time. If you want to learn more about them, go down to George Baker's and he'll tell you all about them. He used to play for square dances. I only danced.

**Note (I have been unable to see Mr. Baker because he is ill.)

Subject———— Folklore— “Uncle Kim” (See interview #3 Form C)

Uncle Kim used to take his grain to a certain miller in East Poultney. He claimed that the miller cheated him. The following verse was published in a local paper many years ago. The informant had a copy in his scrap-book. “Teach me the measure of my grist, Thou maker of my meal; I would survey how much I've missed And learn how millers deal. A grist is all that I can boast, A peck or two at a time; The miller robs me of my grist, Oh, how

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my children pine. See the vile miller lift the toll, The mill begins to crawl; He keeps the grist, sends home the toll, And tells the boy— there's all. Some toll the grist, you know not when, Some catch the meal below; They'll send you home your share of [bran?] And keep your meal for dough. What can we think of thievish man Who neither cares nor feels, The miller robs me of my grist, My cattle starve for meal. Such killers then I will forsake, My empty bags recall; And give my custom to such men As send me home my all.”

The informant also has in his scrap-book an article about Uncle Kim with the following story:

Surveyors were working near Poultney about 1848 to establish the course for a railroad. Uncle kim saw them using their instruments. Later he met some people who asked him if he had seen the surveyors. Uncle Kim answered, “Your Surveyors,” he said, “I saw some fellows looking through the devil's spectacles, trying to find the way to heaven.”

(See interview No. 3 for Mr. Farnum's tales of Uncle Kim.)